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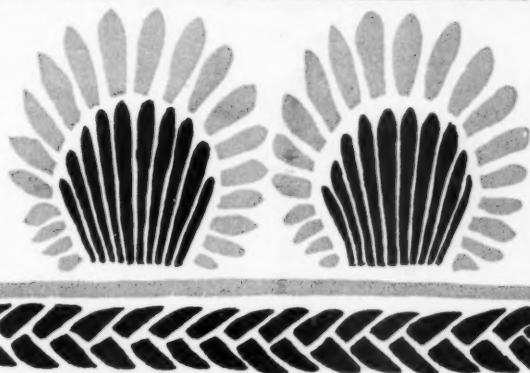
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The American RECORD GUIDE

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AUGUST, 1948 VOL. XIV, NO. 12

edited by PETER HUGH REED

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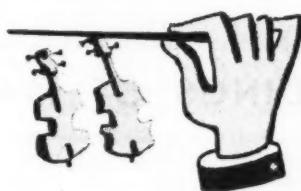
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Editorial Notes

The history of the long-playing record has been reserved for Ulysses Walsh, who has written an article in his familiar ruminating style to be published next month.

Since our last comments, we have had better opportunity to compare the long-playing record with the regular one, as Columbia has sent us a number of records and the attachment for playing them. In our opinion, the crystal pickup employed in the Philco attachment does not do full justice to these new records, and we are eager to hear them played by a more modern magnetic pickup equipped with proper-sized stylus. It was an interesting experience to relax and listen to two full movements of the Serkin-Ormandy performance of the Schumann piano concerto and to the Szigeti-Ormandy rendition of the long first movement of the Brahms' violin concerto without the usual breaks to disturb the receptive equilibrium. But later, playing the 78 r.p.m. records, the reproduction was more realistic and preferable to our ears. One wonders "how use doth breed a habit in a man." Later tests with our own pickup with proper stylus and correct weight may tell another tale.

This long-playing record is unquestionably an advance on all previous ones except present-day transcriptions. However, it is a more perishable disc than ordinary ones, as it requires the utmost care in handling. A blemish or inadvertent scratch from the needle or other source may altogether prevent its performance thereafter, and warpage will hinder playing. Also, the light weight of the tone arm requires a level disc position to operate efficiently. Though the light weight is *in favor* of far less surface sound, the latter is not completely dispersed. The familiar ticks in plastic were apparent though these were far less pronounced than on ordinary discs where a broader stylus and

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SOME ENGLISH RECORDINGS OF 1948

By Edward Sackville-West

Among the huge throng of records issued in Britain during the first half of this year it is not easy to avoid mentioning some which either have been, or shortly will be, published in the U.S.A. Beecham issues, for instance, usually reach you sooner or later; but, taking into account the wild capriciousness of the recording companies, I think it wiser to draw attention to Debussy's *Printemps* (HMV DB6549-50) and Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben* (DB6620-4). *Printemps* is an early (*Prix de Rome*) work, oddly reminiscent of Delius; but when played like this it is difficult to resist the luxurious beauty of sound. Both these recordings are superior to almost any other today, and the performance of Strauss's congested score overrides the contemporary protest. I wonder how many people will feel similarly about the first volume of the Medtner Society (seven HMV DB discs). I think it indubitable that this veteran composer has been unjustly neglected, for if his late-romantic style seems out of fashion now, his thematic material is of a highly imaginative order and his workmanship masterly. The *Second Piano Concerto*, which accounts for most of this first album, is a massive and very ingenious score, marvellously written for the piano and played with great virtuosity by the composer and orchestra (under Issai Dobrowen). Only the liberality of the Maharajah of Mysore, who promoted the Society, could have produced so finely rehearsed and recorded a set as this. The album also contains some piano pieces and three songs, sung by Mmes.

Makushina and Slobodskaya. The latter is especially impressive in the tragic *To a dreamer*.

A shortened version of Britten's *Rape of Lucretia* (HMV C 3699-3706) should have a still wider appeal. This peculiar little opera contains Britten's most beautiful music and it is ideally suited to intimate listening. Some of the cuts are very annoying—there is not a bar of the "thirsty evening" music in scene 1, nor yet of Tarquin's address to the sleeping Lucretia. But of the two English casts the best has been chosen, with Nancy Evans in the title role and Peter Pears as the Male Narrator, and the recording is on the whole quite a good job, though I deplore the fault (much too common nowadays) of placing the singers so near the microphone that they not only distort but are apt to drown the orchestra. In the new set of the Brahms *Requiem* (Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Hans Hotter, Singverein der Musikfreunde, Vienna Phil., Karajan: Col LX1055-64) (already issued in the U.S.A.) the recording balance is very much happier. I do not personally care for the solo singing, but the choral singing is outstandingly beautiful and pure in tone, and the conduct of the whole work irreproachable. From the strings of the same orchestra, under the same conductor, comes Mozart's *Adagio and Fugue in C minor* (K546) (Col LX1076): a rich, majestic presentation, but somewhat too weighty, I cannot help thinking, since the Adagio was originally intended for string quartet and the

Fugue for two pianos.

Since I noticed the German album of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* Decca have begun to issue what I presume to be a complete set, designed to appear gradually (Bach Choir, soloists and Jacques Orch. K1673-9). At least two of the soloists—Elsie Suddaby and Kathleen Ferrier—sing in better style than their German counterparts, and the choral sections are properly to the fore. But there is not much point in buying these records at present, because the selection is a random one and the discs will eventually have to be renumbered.

After a switchback period (1945-7), Decca recordings seem now to have settled down at a somewhat higher average level than HMV or Columbia. I still find their upper strings vary a great deal: at the best they are strikingly realistic, at the worst they whistle and fizz in a manner which makes the whole record very difficult to listen to. Leaving the latter occasions on one side, I should mention first two issues from a conductor who seldom fails to secure an excellent recording: Van Beinum. Under his baton the Concertgebouw gives a thrilling performance of Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps* (K1727-30) and a stylistically impeccable one of Haydn's most lovable *Symphony No. 96 in D major* (K1855-7), an issue which now replaces the old Walter set, good as that was in its day. The same orchestra has made a very neat and well balanced recording of the Nocturne, Intermezzo and Scherzo from Mendelssohn's *Midsummer Night's Dream* music (K1768-9). The Intermezzo, which is scarcely ever heard, is a most delightful, light-fingered piece, in the composer's least banal style. Two of Bizet's sparse but genial orchestral works—the *Symphony in C* (LPO/Münch: K1781-4) and *Jeux d'Enfants* (NSO/Désormière: K1845-6) Sibelius's *En Saga* (LPO/DeSabata: K1504-6); Scenes and Dances from Part 1 of De Falla's *Tricorne* (LSO/Jorda: K1796-7); a worthy but unexciting set of Dvorak's *Fourth Symphony* (NSO/Cameron: K1263-7); a *Concertino* for Piano and Strings by Walter Leigh (Kathleen Long, Boyd Neel Orch. K1832-3); are all of a quality to content us for some time to come. De Sabata's Sibelius is a marvel of dynamic gradualness: the *pianissimi* in this oddly thrilling piece can really be heard, instead of merely imagined behind

the surface noise. Part 1 of the *Tricorne* is here recorded for the first time, so that soon (Part 2 is announced but not yet out) we shall have practically the whole of this wonderful score in what promises to be a uniformly satisfactory recording. Walter Leigh was a pupil of Hindemith; he was killed in Libya in 1942. This young composer is a distinct loss to British music, as his *Concertino* shows, for it is delicately contrapuntal in style, beautifully succinct, and the material is distinguished and individual. Well recorded, though musically of rather more doubtful appeal, are Alan Bush's *Dialectic* (Aeolian String Quartet: K1852-3) and Gerald Finzi's *Dies Natalis*, a setting for soprano and strings of poems by the 17th-century mystic, Traherne (Joan Cross, Boyd Neel Orch.: K1645-7). Alan Bush aims, it is said, at composing for "the masses." Perhaps this *Dialectic* was written before he had that idea: it dates from 1935. In any case it is hard to imagine music less likely to attract a crowd. Energetic but obdurately contrapuntal, it shows some inventive capacity; but general impression (implemented by a most assured performance) is poker-faced and dry as a cracker. I should wish to recommend *Dies Natalis*, because I like it myself; but I fear this is the kind of English music that does not export well. Mild, disarming, full of understatement, it is the work of a reserved and poetic mind. Joan Cross sings it in a touchingly sensitive manner. Before leaving the Decca issues I must draw attention to two remarkably perfect violin sonata sets: Beethoven's *Op. 24 in F major* ("Spring") and Brahms' *Op. 78 in G major*. Max Rostal and Franz Osborn give a beautifully lyrical and technically clean rendering of the first of these sonatas, and it is recorded with the utmost fidelity (K1817-9). In the Brahms Georg Kulenkampff shows that the years have in no way diminished his mastery either of the violin or of the classical style. The piano part is handled with discretion and power by Georg Solti, and the recording (made in Zurich) is admirably balanced (K1705-7).

In a new issue of Beethoven's *Violin Concerto* (HMV DB6574-9) Yehudi Menuhin gives a safe, musicianly, but not truly inspired performance. The beautiful tone of the Lucerne Festival Orchestra is well re-

corded, and the balance is good; but Furtwängler's *rubato* is disturbingly eccentric, though not as disastrous as in the Brahms *First Symphony*, and Ginette Neveu's solo in the Brahms *Violin Concerto* (Philharmonia/Dobrowen/HMV DB6415-9) is distinguished by warmth and a splendid attack. But the recording must be described as a failure, being very sour and "off-centre." Too, the balance is poor and the tutti unmusically noisy.

Rarities are often disappointing; but we should, in my view, be grateful for the chance to appreciate Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Skazka* ("A Fairy Tale"), and Debussy's "poème dansé", *Jeux. Jeux*, which was written for Diaghilev in 1913, vies with Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé* in sheer loveliness of texture. The present performance and recording (Augusteo/De Sabata: HMV DB6493-4) ties for first prize with Beecham's *Heldenleben*. *Skazka* is musically rather thin, but there are some passages of rare charm and the orchestration is always delightfully clear and well balanced (Philharmonia/Lambert: Col DX 1485-6). In no sense rare, Liszt's *Second Piano Concerto* has been recorded several times—notably in a wonderful rendering, full of controlled passion, by Egon Petri; but Malcuzynski's performance (Philharmonica/Süsskind: Col LX1071-3), although rather glaring and the reverse of subtle, is too brilliantly recorded to be ignored. So is Tchaikovsky's exhilarating *Serenade for Strings* (Philharmonia/Dobrowen: HMV C3751-4), which has had a long and checkered recording history, fetching up (until this year) in a rather stodgy performance under Sir Adrian Boult. Dobrowen knows precisely how to make Tsarist music sound Tsarist; and does so here.

Three warnings are tugging at my elbow: Furtwängler's conduct of Brahms' *First Symphony* (Vienna Phil. HMV DB6634-9); the recording of Strauss's enchanting *Oboe Concerto* (Léon Goossens/Philharmonia/Galleria: Col DX1444-6); and Stravinsky's *Concerto in D for Strings* (Hallé/Barbirolli: HMV C3733-4). Of the first I can only say that Furtwängler's old and vulgar mannerism of slowing down in soft passages and hurrying up in loud ones, has now reached a point at which, under his baton, a symphonic movement loses all shape and momentum. There is nothing wrong with the perform-

ance of Strauss's *Oboe Concerto*: in this case it is the recording—harsh and shallow—which spoils the quality of this rococo piece. The little Stravinsky *Concerto* needs a more tidy performance, if its jejune prettiness is to work. The dregs, as it were, of *Apollon Musagète*, this kind of smart cleverness would hardly get by if it were not signed by Stravinsky.

Seven opera singers deserve attention: Mariano Stabile in two arias from Verdi's *Falstaff*—"L'onore Ladri" (act 1) and "Ehi Taverniere" (act 3)—the latter not recorded before by this classic Falstaff (Col. LX1081); a new Spanish star with a big, dramatic soprano, Victoria de los Angeles, in two arias from Falla's *La Vida Breve* (HMV DB6702); Tito Gobbi magnificently cheeky in the "Largo al Factotum" (*Barbiere*) and exquisitely sinister in "Era la notte" (*Otello*) (HMV DB6626); the Greco-Welsh tenor, Tano Ferendinos, in two Massenet arias—the "Dream" from *Manon* and "Ah non mi ridestar" from *Werther* (Col. DX 1475). In the first Ferendino's portamento is excessive, but in the second he sings with a most beautiful and steady tone. Erna Berger, one of the few really secure coloratura sopranos left in Europe, triumphs in an effortless rendering of the great vocal concerto from Mozart's *Entführung*—"Marten aller Arten" (HMV DB6616). Hilde Konetzni delivers the lovely, Lisztian aria from the last act of Smetana's *Bartered Bride*—"Endlich allein"—with great expression and richness of tone, if rather too slowly (Col. LX1074). The orchestral playing and balance in this record are particularly successful. Lastly the Jugoslav baritone, Marko Rothmüller, in my opinion the finest male singer we have heard in England since before the war, has recorded souvenirs of his stage triumphs as Rigoletto and Scarpia. "Pari siamo" (*Rigoletto*) and "Gia! mi dicon venal" (*Tosca*) give an excellent idea of this singer's superb tone and dramatic power (HMV C3689). Apart from Elisabeth Schumann, whose record is no longer available, I know no present day singer who could manage Schubert's *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* with such ease and purity and lyrical feeling as Margaret Ritchie (acc. Gerald Moore, with Reginald Kell, clarinet: HMV C3688). The recording falls off a little at the centre of the disc, but is

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MUSIC and GEOGRAPHY

By Neville d'Esterre

Fifty years ago, when with the aid of copious journalistic propaganda, the public of two continents was discovering Wagner, it was commonly asserted, and it may even have been widely believed, that to hear Wagner's music performed as Wagner had conceived it in his own head, one had to go to Bayreuth. Almost all the musical people of those days—except, of course, the impenetrable Anti-Wagnerites—made this assertion, although few of them put its validity to the test by going to Bayreuth. Whether they believed it—it*e.i.* had really addressed themselves practically to the task of thinking it out—is another matter. Prompted by a life-long familiarity with people who find comfort or excitement in artistic experiences, and like to talk about them, I should consider it probable that most of them never let the subject exercise their minds at all, but gave forth the statement because it sounded pretty and plausible, and might leave an impression about the place, that they, the speakers, were people who understood something that was Double-Dutch to the man-in-the-street. Having encountered so many of these people in the ante-rooms of high culture, I cannot avoid the feeling that the Bayreuthites of those days of Wagner adoration were seldom capable of thinking in a clear headed way on any subject, though quite prepared (such of them as had the courage to make the journey to Franconia in small ships and slow, uncomfortable trains) to allow the incense of Wahnfried to work its spell upon their feeble constitutions, as soon as they came into the sacred presence; so that, having found their way into the Festspielhaus, they did actually succumb to the belief that *Tannhaeser* and *Tristan*, and *Siegfried* were being presented to them, by all concerned from the artists, the conductor to the call-boy, with a standard of excellence quite unattainable at

Covent Garden, or the Metropolitan, or the Opera at Brussels.

It is possible that this kind of person is still at large, although the sub-human fatuity of his expressed opinions was exposed by Bernard Shaw as long ago as 1895. Possible, I say, and even likely; for the illusion persists among us, in every country where music is an integral part of the higher culture (and not a mere physical stimulus, as it is over most of Asia and Africa), that works produced by the natives of any particular land demand natives of the same land to perform them with authority and precision. Now, I am going to say at once that although it is more than doubtful if artists like Gigli, Horowitz, Menuhin, Elisabeth Schumann, Leon Goossens and Bruno Walter could do justice to themselves in the music of Zululand and Outer Mongolia, yet there is not a jot or tittle of evidence that Mozart is better performed in Salzburg than in New York, or that Paris has ever come within miles of equaling the performances of Berlioz that London has placed on record.

I propose to speak here from personal experience. As illustration, the Wagnerian music-drama will do as well as anything else. Indeed, it will do better than anything else; for most of it presents sufficient difficulties in performance to debar anybody but first-class artists from attempting to perform it. To no works, in fact, are slip-shod performances so devastating as to Wagner's. Very well, then. Like most of the people who read what is written here, I have heard these works often enough to be able to exercise comparative judgment about them in the matter of presentation. I have experienced (though I have never been to Bayreuth) both good and indifferent performances of most of them, and have only once heard one of them thoroughly badly performed. (This was a performance of *Lohengrin* in Australia, over 40 years ago; and all the principal vocalists concerned happened, strange to say, to be natives of Germany!) In brief, I know those Wagner pieces as well as I know anything generally accepted as music of the first order. And this is my experience, in detail:

The best Van der Dekken I ever heard was Frederick Austin, an Englishman; the best Wolfram, Clarence Whitehill, an American; The best Telramund and Wotan David Bispham, another American; the best Elsa, Emma Eames, still another American; the best Tristan, Frank Mullings, another Englishman; the best Lohengrin, Jean de Reszke, a Pole; the best Senta, Aino Akte, a Finn; the best Walther, Lauritz Melchior, a Dane; the best Parsifal, Paul Franz, a Frenchman. In all these parts I have heard Germans; but the singers I have mentioned excelled those Germans both vocally and as actors and actresses. In the matter of conducting—rather important when it comes to Wagner—I have never known anybody to excel the Englishman, Sir Thomas Beecham. And, when concert performances of Wagnerian extracts come to be considered, I have yet to encounter a more effective compre-

hension of this music than is manifested by the English Beecham, and the Italian Toscanini, or was exhibited in the past by the Russian Safonoff and the Magyar Nikisch.

I do not deny that Germany has given us some great Wagnerian artists, and superlative conductors of his works. One need only mention Matzenhauer and Forchammer, and Schorr, and Lotte Lehmann among the singers, and Richter, and Mottl, Muck, and Bruno Walter among the conductors, and the case for Germany is proved. Still it is simple nonsense to say that none but Germans can perform Wagner, as Wagner ought to be performed; and the simple nonsense becomes downright lunacy if you add that this must inevitably be so because Wagner was born in Leipzig.

I have never known anybody to suggest that for perfect performances of Wagner it would be necessary to confine your recruitment of artists to the City of Leipzig, or, at least, to the ancient Kingdom of Saxony. But that is really the logical conclusion which you have to accept, if you insist that none but natives can achieve a full and natural comprehension of the art-work of their own locality. The test can be applied to Bach as well as to Wagner; and where is it going to lead you?

Recorded Performances

Nor in the realm of recordings can contention be made that best performances are dependent on native-born artists or environments. As admirable as are the recordings made at Bayreuth, they are not only challenged but bettered by many others made in England, America and Austria. It is no fallacy to say that Bach and Beethoven have been more auspiciously served on records in other countries than Germany. A geographical survey of best performances on records would—I feel confident—reveal many further analogies. Such a survey might well prove a fascinating diversion if one had time to give it.

One day, in the spacious years that are gone, I found myself debating musical affairs in a casual way with two Londoners, a musical critic and an impresario, both of whom, though they "gloried in the name of Briton" were of German-Jewish extraction. We had just been at a Symphony Concert conducted by Sir Henry Wood. The musical critic remarked that Henry Wood conducted Brahms without intelligence; and I was disposed to agree to that, because the E minor Symphony had been a long interlude of boredom to me that afternoon. Then the impresario chimed in. "But, of course", he said; "what do you expect? No English conductor can see his way into ultra-German music like Brahms. You must have a German to handle that music. Look at Steinbach, now! When he takes Brahms in hand you get the real thing." There was no argument about it; it is waste of time to dispute with a dogmatist. I well remembered Fritz Steinbach's way of "taking Brahms in hand". It was a heavy hand; but Steinbach had spent a lifetime at the game, and he knew Brahms inside out. Also, he knew noth-

ing else. The programmes he conducted carried the names of all sorts of composers, ranging from J. S. Bach to Richard Strauss; but everything you heard was Brahms. His interpretation of the (Brahms-Schubert) Unfinished Symphony is one of the most painful experiences in my recollections; although the (Brahms-Haydn) Drum Roll Symphony runs it very close. I know that if I had mentioned the name of Wagner to my impresario friend, he would have replied: "Wagner? Do you think you ever hear a note of the real Wagner in London? You may take it from me, that, if you have never been to the Bayreuth Festival, you have never heard Wagner".

No Illusion

Am I speaking of an illusion that has gone the way of all illusions? I think not. It peeped out at me quite recently from an obscure sheet of newsprint. There had been, it seemed, an ill-mannered controversy going on in that publication, upon the profound significance—overlooked to a criminal degree in English-speaking countries—of the music of the Soviet Union. An initialised person of undisclosed breed and sex (but probably male, Anglo-Saxon, and hypochondriacal) informed us that it was beyond our ability to understand or appreciate the People's Music of Modern Russia, not just because we were not Russians, or even Bulgars or Slovenes, but because we poor fish—i.e. all of us who didn't see eye to eye with the writer—were afflicted with a species of political ideology, so antiquated and moth-eaten as to be almost insanitary. Thus, when snatches of the People's Music reached our ears through the medium of that broad-minded (or possibly no-minded) institution, the B.B.C., their tremendous message was lost to us; which happened, not merely because we ourselves were insufficiently developed in intelligence to assimilate it, but because British executive musicians, libertarians and individualists to a man, could not do otherwise than deface it in performance. I took the next opportunity of listening to some of it (not much, for I am really fond of music); and I have to confess that it sounded to me just like any other pedantic, atonal tosh, such as the hack composers of the present age turn out by the square mile in every country where the art of composition is taught to people designed by nature for the functions of stockbrokers and insurance agents.

My own inclination, shared, I trust, by those who read these words, is to tread on all this pernicious misleading nonsense with a heavy foot, whenever and wherever it shows evidences of vitality. I know that it is frequently asserted that nobody but a Pole, *pur sang*, can execute the rhythmic accentuation of a Chopin *Mazurka* and nobody but a Czech can achieve the right variations of tempo in one of Dvorak's *Slavonic Dances*. Both assertions are disproved every time a Chopin *Mazurka* is played by Myra Hess, and every time a Dvorak *Slavonic Dance* is performed with Beecham conducting the orchestra. I know how Pad-

ewski played the *Mazurkas*, and how Nikisch with his early Czech affinities conducted the *Dances*. I am familiar with the views of Arthur Rubinstein and Georg Szell on these matters. But it is also quite evident to me that the charming results achieved in each case are the effect, not of nationality, or social environment but of musicianship; in token of which it may be placed on record, as a timely reminder, that nobody ever matched Paderewski as an interpreter of Mendelssohn; that Nikisch had no superior as a conductor of Wagner; that Arthur Rubinstein is one of the finest living exponents of the music of modern Spain; and that Georg Szell is one of the best Beethoven conductors of this or any other period.

As for the People's Music of Soviet Russia, it is my firm conviction that anybody can do complete justice to this kind of music, if he allows himself to wallow in its dissonance with sufficient abandon to get the hang of what the composer is striving to express. To accomplish this, all you have to do is to give it your undivided attention for several months on end; and the national origin of the composer is neither here nor there—you are best advised to ignore it. In that style of music the language of a Frenchman or a Magyar (or even of an Englishman) is exactly the same as the language of a Russian. And, as for such music having any relationship to the soul of any People in creation, or springing from like the fountain-head of the Volga or the Dnieper—just ask any practical creative artist what he thinks about it. Those who profess to discern the Voice of The People in the Leningrad Symphony (to mention the work of a Russian who happens to be a musician), resemble those who claim to detect the sentiments of a hide-bound Tory in the *Engima Variations*, or the spirit of Goebbels and Himmler in *Die Meistersinger*.



FROM DUET TO SEXTET

By Philip H. Delano

Part XI

Some Victor Recordings of 1914

Two records of considerable interest are the McCormack-Marsh duets, *Carmen*—*Parle-moi de ma mère* (74345, 8034) issued in August 1913

and the *Aida*—*O terra addio* (74398, 8034) which appeared in December 1914. Neither is common but the *Aida* is scarcer, probably because it was competing with the more famous Caruso-Gadski (89029) version. McCormack gives characteristic intelligent performances but record collectors in 1914 tended to regard him as a concert singer of songs that they bought by the carload. His great operatic interpretations were largely overlooked in favor of the clarion-voiced Caruso. Lucy Isabelle Marsh, an American lyric soprano, popular in concert and light opera for many years, fits the role of Micaela better than Aida. Her voice blends well with that of McCormack but lacks the substantial quality of first-class operatic voices associated with the latter role. Evidently Victor was making cheaper records to enlarge their catalogue and we should feel fortunate to have these fine McCormack duets at all rather than perhaps records by Marsh and Althouse. Later the *Aida* scene was recorded by Martinelli and Rosa Ponselle in a wonderful electric version (1745) that is one of my favorite records.

Further evidence of McCormack's operatic prowess was given late in 1914 by the appearance of two duets with Lucrezia Bori,—the *Traviata*—*Parigi o cara* (88453, 89126, 10006, Gr 2-054055, HMV DM 104) and *Bohème*—*O soave fanciulla* (87512, 3029). The *Bohème* duet lacks the fire and drive of the Caruso-Melba version (95200) but in *Traviata* the artists are ideally suited to their roles and the record has been called "the finest duet ever recorded." It is included in Victor's Heritage series (disc 15-1009).

Another *Rigoletto*—*Quartet* was issued in November 1914. This record by McCormack, Jacoby, Bori, and Werrenrath (89080, 10006, Gr 2-054061, HMV DM 104) was not placed in Victor's 95000-numbered all-star series but is interesting nevertheless. Reinald Werrenrath was an American artist, a baritone with a light pleasing voice and good style. He was principally successful as a concert singer throughout the United States but also appeared a few times at the Metropolitan Opera Co. He was a prolific recording artist on Victor red, black, and blue labels, making operatic, concert, and popular selections impartially. The voice was relatively small but it was used effectively and his records need not be neglected. He appeared also late in 1913 with Ober in the duet *Rheingold*—*Weiche Wotan* (74396).

Hempel was represented in 1914 by three duets with Amato. These were *Traviata*—*Dile alla giovane* (July: 89079, 15-1020); *Traviata*—*Impone* (September: 89081, 15-1020); and *Rigoletto*—*Figlia, mio padre* (December: 89082). Although these discs are quite scarce in original form, they are well worth having. The *Traviata* duets have been recently reissued as one of the Heritage (15-1020) series and in that form are easily obtained. The records are beautiful, rich, and warm but operatically I prefer the interpretations of Galvany and Ruffo (92503) or Galli-Curci and De Luca (88596). Amato is a rather stuffy Germont, in my estimation. Frieda Hempel was born in Leipzig, June 26,

1885. Her first training was on the piano but her voice developed and she entered the Stern Conservatorium in Berlin to study under Mme. Kempner. Her debut was made in August 1905 in *The Merry Wives Of Windsor*, at the Royal Opera House in Berlin. From 1905 to 1907 she sang at the Court Opera in Schwerin, then returned to Berlin for five more years. She appeared first in America in 1912, singing at the Metropolitan for 10 years. She also gave numerous vocal recitals throughout the United States and in London. Her voice was rich and true, a beautiful pure coloratura of exceptional merit. Her operatic repertory was extensive, principally Italian, but especially Mozart in which she had few equals. She made a large number of recordings for Victor and Gramophone but most are scarce and many are quite rare. In view of their beauty and excellence this would be surprising if we did not know that she also made a number of very worthwhile records for Edison, Victor's arch-enemy. We can surmise that the Victor company thenceforth, in accordance with old established custom, simply promoted other artists who were more exclusive. Call it what you will, there is no gainsaying that such tactics were tremendously effective in building up the Victor roster of exclusive artists and suppressing competition from other companies.

The *Masked Ball* — *Quintet (E scherzo)* with Caruso, Hempel, Duchene, Rothier, and De Segurola (89076, 10005, 16-5000, Gr 2-054050, HMV DM 103) appeared in June 1914 and was followed in August by the quartet: *La rivedra* with Caruso, Hempel, Rothier, and De Segurola (89077, 10005, Gr 2-054052, HMV DM 103). These are all-star numbers in which Caruso gives his customary excellent performance. He also appeared with Destinn in a duet from *Guarany* — *Sento una forza indomita* (89078, 6355, HMV DB 616). Like most Caruso records, these all had a good sale and are not difficult to find.

Destinn was represented again by the duet with Gilly, "Good-Night" issued in August. The song is quite typical of the Bohemian folk-songs that Destinn loved from her native Bohemia and were frequently presented in the concerts given by the couple throughout the United States. Dinh Gilly was born in Algeria, the son of a French Colonel and an Arabic mother. The name Dinh is arabic for "faith." He studied at the Paris Conservatoire and sang in the Paris Opera till 1909. From 1909 to 1914 he sang at the Met. in many operas. He died in London on May 19, 1940.

Two more of the series of popular records by Gluck and Homer appeared in August and October 1914 respectively. These were *Rock Of Ages* (87198, 87528, 3009) and the *Barcarolle* from *Tales Of Hoffman* (87202, 87532, 3010). The older Barcarolle by Farrar and Scotti (87502) was already well liked, and how much competition the new one gave it is not known. McCormack issued his record with Kreisler (87245, 87551, 3019) in September 1916 and collectors had three to choose from. All sold well and are quite easy to secure.

Late in 1914 the first Gluck-Reimers duet appeared "Du, Du Liegst Mir Im Herzen" (87182, 87536, 3011), the forerunner of several German songs. The voices of this couple harmonized excellently and their records were very popular. Paul Reimers was a well-known tenor singer in concert and oratorio both in Europe and America. His Victor records are largely on blue labels and show fine artistic sensibility in lieder and concert favorites. The duets with Gluck are of course on red labels and later a number of them were remade with Lashansky replacing Gluck. He also recorded a number of selections on Edison discs.

Another Gadski-Goritz duet, the *Magic Flute* — *Papagena* (87510, HRS 1008) appeared in 1914. As they were playing favorite and familiar roles, their performance was excellent. The record is scarce but not rare. Gadski was a wonderful artist and her later records such as this give no true idea of her real one-time capabilities. In particular, I recall my first hearing of the 1903 *Ho-yo-to-ho* (81018). It was positively "electrifying." Alas, the electricity was comparatively spent when she recorded the later 87002.

The last of the Clement-Farrar duets, *Mefistofele* — *Lontano, lontano* (88422, 89114, 8020, HMV DB 172) appeared late in 1913. It is excellent, in keeping with the stature of the artists but unfortunately may be a little difficult to find. Clement was a great artist who polished and turned his phrases to perfection. A Clement-Farrar coupling would be excellent material for the Heritage series.

Last but not least in 1914 was the duet from Mascagni's opera *Isabeau* — *I tuoi occhi* by De Muro and Bartolomasi (74375). Like many of the records imported from Europe, this is extremely rare and hard to find. The performance is typically Italian in style with the tenor giving the better account. Bernardo De Muro was born in Sardinia, November 3, 1881. He sang at the principal theatres in Italy and South America, including La Scala where he was a great favorite and where he created the part of Folco in *Isabeau*. His voice was big and straightforward with plenty of vibrato in the Italian style. He appeared in America with the Salmaggi Opera Co. in New York. Information about Bartolomasi is not available but judging from her performance, she was a soprano of moderate ability.

Editorial Notes

(Continued from page 361)

a heavier pickup is in use. One reviewer christens the Microgroove "the kid-glove record."

Professionals with whom we have discussed the long-playing disc compare it immediately with the transcription record with which they have been long familiar in radio and the laboratory.

"There is no reason," writes a Boston engineer, "to believe that at their best, the Microgroove records should be better than the best transcriptions. Many show a substantial noise level if exposed to wear and dirt. Actually, the Microgroove should be noisier because of the low recording level. So far, I have played them only with the Columbia player, and the range was noticeably restricted . . . There are many points in favor of the long-playing record, and I, for one, feel that Columbia has done a good job in keeping the noise level as low as it is in view of the low recording level. The use of the dynamic noise suppressor will, in my opinion, be a real advantage on many of these discs, and since there is a lower surface to suppress, as on the average phonograph record, net results should be very fine indeed."

A New York engineer states that "the successful playing of the Microgroove record depends greatly on the perfection of shape and the polish of the sapphire stylus, and on its wearing qualities. It has to be right in the beginning, and it has to stay that way, else the wear is going to be considerable. In the standard-grooved disc there is more margin for error in the size of the needle than in the Microgroove. The former allows for a wider tolerance.

"One point about these records, already mentioned by the editor, has to do with their manufacture. This has to be consistently good. Plating and pressing of the disc cannot vary. It is my opinion that at \$5.00, the company can afford to pour finer workmanship into one record than it could in a regular set containing four records at the same price.

"An interesting aspect of the long-playing record is everything is a factor of three. For example, there are approximately three times as many grooves per inch, the depth of the groove is approximately one third of the regular record, and the needle point (.001) is one third the size of the accepted standard of .003. As the law of diminishing returns comes into effect, greater accuracy of workmanship is demanded."

The Microgroove records issued so far are, with the possible exception of Tchaikovsky's *Francesca da Rimini* by Stokowski and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra (M. L. 4071), all dubbings of regular issues. It

is to the credit of Columbia's engineering skill that this tricky work has been expertly accomplished, maintaining a smooth continuous sound which gives no idea of where the original breaks occur. Further discussions on this disc will be forthcoming. The viewpoints of readers are invited. It is our hope that the long-playing record has come to stay and that improvements will be forthcoming.

SOME ENGLISH RECORDS

(Continued from page 364)

otherwise good. Equally charming is a record of three folk songs—Italian, Russian, and Tyrolese—by some schoolgirls under 12 (HMV C3676). Out of a large number of excellent school choir records made recently by HMV for educational purposes, I choose this one to recommend because of its utter genuineness, its touching innocence, and its truth of intonation. This is, in the most acceptable sense, a surprising record.

Where piano solos are concerned nothing by Dinu Lipatti should be missed. Liszt's *Sonetto di Petrarca No. 104* (Col LB68) and Ravel's *Alborada del Gracioso* (Col LB70) do not call out the more remarkable qualities of this great pianist, but they serve to display the restraint and delicacy, the eloquence and grace, of his incomparable style. Cortot's recording of Schumann's *Kinderszenen* (HMV DB6700-1) does more than that, because the music is so much more moving. I cannot pretend to agree with everything Cortot does in painting these miniatures; but an exaggerated rubato, here and there, a few eccentricities of tempo, do not seriously affect the aggregate impression of a lifetime of musical thought and feeling. This is a very important issue, and the piano tone is exceptionally well managed.

From a period not rich in recordings of chamber music I extract the Trio di Trieste's issue of Ravel's *Trio* (HMV C3607-9). This is a sumptuous performance of what is perhaps Ravel's largest and most wholly satisfying work.

—Edward Sackville-West

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RECORD NOTES AND

REVIEWS



ALFANO: *Symphony No. 2 in D major*; Orchestra Sinfonia dell'EIAR, conducted by F. Previtali. Cetra discs Nos. CB 20306/09, price \$2.50 each.

▲Here is a symphony (written in 1933) imbued with an Italian lyricism and a broad dramatic puissance, traceable to its composer's operatic bent. Alfano is best known in this country for his opera *Resurrezione* (based on Tolstoi) which Mary Garden revived with considerable interest. The same operatic agitation derived from chromaticism, sentiment from songful melody, and effective orchestration prevails in this symphony. Though the development is unquestionably progressive, the pattern resists analysis without recourse to the score. I am reminded of a comment once made about another Italian symphony. "The listener's

perception may be as naive and spontaneous as the original conception."

The work is in three movements — *Allegro* (3 sides), *Adagio* (2 sides), and *Finale alla marcia* (3 sides). Several hearings leave me with the impression that the material of this composition while diverting is not substantial for a symphony. The lyrically graceful, dancelike opening with its folkish quality has a wholesome charm which should have prevailed. The dramatic boldness of the middle section and the melodic sentiment at the end greatly alter its continuity. The slow movement is mood music aiming for no great depth of feeling, reminiscent of Dvorak at times. It develops toward the middle into a broadly songful style more appropriate to the theater. The finale (a march), dramatically ponderous and showy, suggests influences of the operatic Prokofieff. Only toward the end does a brief dancelike energy supply essential spontaneity.

The performance is skillfully directed and the recording is excellent. —P.H.R.

BAND MUSIC: *Washington Post March* (Sousa — arr. Lang); *Fourth of July* (Gould); *March, Op. 99* (Prokofieff); *Work Song* (Still); *Yankee Doodle* (arr. Gould);

Home For Christmas (Gould); *Irish Tune from County Derry* (arr. Grainger); *Shepherd's Hey* (arr. Grainger); Morton Gould and his Symphonic Band. Columbia set MM-743, four 10-inch discs, price \$4.90.

▲ Band music is everybody's music, for as a performing medium it is a most popular form of musical expression. For a number of years Morton Gould has written and arranged specifically for what he calls symphonic band. Wide acceptance and performance by school and college organizations bespeak the usefulness and appeal of these compositions.

This album should prove one of the most popular that Gould has made for Columbia. His uncanny insight into technical efficiency and observance of balance produces smooth, well polished performances which are excellently recorded. There's no question that there will be many listeners among the general public who will welcome this set, and to the young band players throughout the country it should be a stimulus. The music needs no endorsement nor comment. I found the Prokofieff *March*, an original for band, and the Grainger numbers particularly attractive.

—J.N.

BACH: *Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B flat*; The Boston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. Victor set DM-1211, three discs, price \$4.75 (manual set \$5.75).

▲ Koussevitzky's conception of Bach is as far removed from that of Klempener's or Busch's as Leipzig is from Tanglewood, where the present set was recorded. Few will deny the beauty of sound the Boston Symphony brings to the *Brandenburg Concertos*, but the sensuousness of expression and the mannered conception of the melodic shaping gives the music a modernism which is alien to its composer's intentions. Choice in these matters may be largely personal, but those who prefer as I do to be taken back into the classical world of Bach without reminder of sheer orchestral splendor and virtuosity of modern times will be happier with the quieter and more intimate qualities of the Busch performances.

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 7 in A major, Op. 92*; National Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Anatole Fistoulari. Decca set EDA-55, five discs, price \$11.00.

▲ To one long familiar with the superb Toscanini interpretation of this work, the so-called magic of full-range recording does not enhance a performance where only competence replaces inspiration. In the history of recording, the discerning critic will give precedence to those orchestral selections that Toscanini made with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, and his performance of Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony* will always rank as one of the great contributions to the phonograph. Comparing that 1936 recording of Toscanini with this new one, I find the vitality and realism of the older one by no means very seriously challenged.—P.H.R.

DEBUSSY: *Image, No. 2 — Iberia*; L'orchestre de la Société du Conservatoire de Paris, conducted by Charles Muench. Decca set EDA-51, three discs, price \$7.00.

▲ As in the Beethoven *Seventh*, the recording is the main feature of this set. Muench's interpretation of this evocative score is too literal, too sentimental and too garish. Debussy's poetic dream-music of a Spain he had never seen becomes vivid tourist's post-card pictures, reminiscent of the oldtime Tuck color prints that prevailed throughout Europe in the old days. One returns to the less vivid, but nonetheless satisfying recording of Reiner (Columbia 491) for a subtler and truer projection of this music's evanescent texture. These two sets have a parallel in recorded history. In September 1938 Victor issued an amazingly brilliant recording of this work by Barbirolli and the N.Y. Philharmonic Symphony, to replace the 1936 issue — less opulently recorded — by Coppola and the same orchestra. Muench conducts. Barbirolli, like Muench, showed no appreciation of the evocative poetic qualities of the music, while Coppola, like Reiner, revealed a subtler perception. The facts are apparent: reproduction took precedence over musical interpretation.

—P.H.R.

BOCCHERINI: *Minuet from String Quintet in E, Op. 13, No. 5*; and **BOLZONI:** *Minuet*; The Boston "Pops" Orchestra, conducted by Arthur Fiedler. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1418, price \$1.00.

▲The ever-popular Boccherini minuet deserves to be recorded in its original form for string quintet (not quartet as the label states). To compare this new version with existent ones would be a great chore (and, one is tempted to say, a great bore). Suffice it to say, Fiedler turns in a light-handed performance conveying nicely the lilt of the music. The minuet by Bolzoni, a minor 19th-century Italian composer, is far less infectious music though it has a type of melodic gracefulness which makes for popularity. On records it has been previously available only in a couple of European orchestral versions and one by the Saxophone Quartet of Paris. Representative Boston "Pops" recording.

—P.G.

BORODIN: *Symphony No. 2 in B minor*; Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Desire Defauw. Victor set DM-1225, three discs, price \$4.75 (manual set \$5.75).

▲Defauw has previously revealed a flair for the Russians in recordings. That "high degree of luminosity," which Virgil Thomson cites as the quality which makes outstanding Defauw's performance of Prokofieff's *Scythian Suite*, is brought to this music. There is both "precise orchestral balances and correct rhythmic scansion" in his traversal of this score, though the performance is more forthright than artful. However, Borodin profits with this sort of treatment, even as he does with reproductive realism which for the first time is found in this set. Undoubtedly, the Mitropoulos performance was more ingeniously contrived with more pointing up of inner line and detail, but the recording in his case was very poorly obtained. A recent set by Constant Lambert and the Hallé Orchestra (issued by English Columbia in September 1943) does not compare from a reproductive standpoint, though as a performance it evidences some exceptional feeling for rhythmic subtlety. Strangely, Lambert handled the famous scherzo rather deliberately, while Defauw gives it freer hand. In order to get the work on three discs, Defauw makes a cut in the scherzo of approximately 78 bars, but inasmuch as the material is largely repetitious no disservice is done to the composer. In fact, this cut fits the work more ideally to records, allowing the third movement to lead logically into the finale without break as the composer in-

dicated. One point in Defauw's performance is open to dispute—his trumped-up ending, which remains far less effective than the original one. If there is a precedent for this I am unfamiliar with it.

Of Borodin's *B Minor*, I concur with W. R. Anderson's remarks in *The Gramophone*: "The excitement does not stale with time: there is still a thrill, almost a savage one, to be found in the work, which very many will doubtless be glad to have . . .". The greatness of this music does not concern us; its vitality is still apparent. I have always enjoyed it in performance, but perhaps can be thankful that I have not heard it too often to dim its appeal. Though the work has no actual program, it was unquestionably the composer's intention to recreate in this symphony the Russian primeval myths, and much of its thematic substance was derived from material he collected for *Prince Igor*.

Borodin stated that the barbaric energy of the opening movement depicts the Russian knights of old and the brilliant and exciting finale "an assembly of legendary heroes amid general public elation". One recalls the utterance of the Russian critic of Borodin's time who said: "Hearing this music, you are reminded of the ancient Russian knights in all their awkwardness and also in all their greatness." The slow movement is said to "evoke impressions of early Slavic minstrels". In this opus, Borodin proves his right to be called an epic poet. Compared

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—P.H.R.

CARNIVAL TROPICANA: *Malaguena* (Lecuona); *No Tobeiro de Bahiana* (Barroso); *La Cumparsita* (Rodriguez); *Adios* (Madriguerra); *Jarable Tapatio* (Partchila); *Cielito lindo* (Fernandez); *La Goldorina* (Serradell); *Caminito* (Filbertto); *Quiéreme mucho* (Riog); *Siboney* (Lecuona); Andre Kostelanetz and his Orchestra. Columbia set MM-753, four discs, price \$6.00.

▲ You can't go wrong on this set. Kostelanetz provides all the rhythmic oomph, glowing orchestral timbre and excitement that the music asks. Whether it's Brazilian, Argentine, Mexican or Cuban, the conductor seems to understand the impetus, and to each piece he brings his familiar lusciousness of sound, which the recording faithfully reproduces. Barroso's *samba*, here recorded for the first time, is a fascinating bit of elemental energy drawn from an equally fascinating city—Bahia. And the *Mexican Hat Dance* of Partchila has been aptly described as an irresistible invitation to the dance.

—P.G.

DIAMOND: *Music for Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet* (5 sides), and *Overture to The Tempest* (1 side); The Little Orchestra Society, conducted by Thomas K. Scherman. Columbia set M or DM-751, price \$4.75.

▲ David Diamond, one of the most versatile of the younger American composers, says that the plays of Shakespeare have always been a great source of inspiration for him. In 1944, he wrote the incidental music for the Webster production of *The Tempest*, the overture of which is included as a filler in this set. Mr. Scherman, whose Little Orchestra Society, has been responsible for some of the most unusual chamber concerts in New York this past year, asked Diamond to write something for his organization. That "something" turned out to be another Shakespeare-inspired work, *Music for Romeo and Juliet*, which is divided into five parts: *Overture*, *Balcony Scene*, *Romeo and Friar Lawrence*, *Juliet and her Nurse*, and *Death of Romeo and Juliet*.

Diamond's engrossment with the tragedy of the two ill-starred lovers is not reminiscent of other Romeo and Juliet music though its facile sentiment pursues a familiar romantic pattern. His *Overture*, said to convey "all the characteristics of the play in a very concentrated formal structure", seems a bit emotionally complex and not so spontaneous as his *Overture to The Tempest*. The *Balcony Scene* is more atmospheric than descriptive, and *Romeo and Friar Lawrence* aims for a dramatic tenseness not fulfilled. *Juliet and her Nurse*, suggesting a bit of womanly gossip, is diverting and by far the most characteristic movement. The elegaic qualities of the finale are expressive. This is immediately accessible music, skillfully scored, melodically graceful, and varied in texture and mood. Further, it has a goodly share of youthful sentiment which most listeners will find appealing. What the music lacks for me is a truly impassioned compulsion, without which even a performance of the play fails in conviction.

Mr. Scherman has contrived a nice sounding performance, though a tendency to sacrifice rhythm to accent on occasion makes for some angularity of line. However, the competence of the conductor and his ensemble suggest a much longer association than has existed. The recording is excellent.

FALLA: *The Three Cornered Hat—Three Dances*; The Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Alceo Galliera. Columbia set X or MX-297, two discs, price \$3.50.

▲ This recording was recommended by Edward Sackville-West in his British record notes in our February-1947 issue. It is a more resonant, rich toned reproduction of the three best known excerpts from the ballet—The Neighbors' Dance, The Miller's Dance, and Final Dance—than we have had previously. Too, the young Italian conductor—Alceo Galliera—has a deft trigger finger on the pulsating rhythms of the music, bringing a welcome and much needed elasticity to these irresistible Spanish dances. Of the *The Miller's Dance* (*farruca*), J. B. Trend in his book on de Falla says, it "is a completely 'abstract' piece of dancing, which holds the audience in tense excitement from the first beat to the last". Those who saw Massine in the ballet performance have never for-

gotten his characterization. The *Final Dance*, a *jota*, Trend fittingly describes as "an orgy of conflicting rhythms".

The ballet is based on a short story by Alarcon, the latter "founded on a late Spanish ballad, which again is said (like many popular ballads) to be founded on fact". Hugo Wolf used the same tale for his opera *Der Corregidor*. It concerns a miller and his wife and the local Corregidor (or Governor) who wears the official three-cornered hat. The latter tries to win the affections of the miller's wife, but the miller neatly turns the tables on him. Sackville-West deplores the practice of playing and recording these three dances in place of the whole work. "There is not a page of this ballet," he says, "which one would forego." I, for one, definitely second his bid for the whole ballet on records, and am delighted to find in his latest notes on British records mention of some scenes and dances from Part 1 of the ballet on English Decca discs K1796/97. The reader, unfamiliar with this delightful music, is urged to hear this set. (For best reproduction reduce the bass below the requirement in American recordings.)

GLAZOUNOFF: *From the Middle Ages—Suite Op. 79*; Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Fabien Sevitzky. Victor set DM-1222, three discs, price \$4.75 (manuel set \$5.75).

▲ Though there is spontaneity of conception and execution in Glazounoff's music, very little of it stamps itself on the listener's memory. At the turn of the century his music was very much admired in Russia and his symphonies were probably played as much as Tchaikovsky's. Today, they are seldom heard. It is of interest to find this opus included in a monthly list from Victor containing the vital Borodin symphony. The two works are poles apart, even though Glazounoff's program deals with a similar early period in history, but the influences of the latter are more German than Russian. At the start of his career, Glazounoff owed much to his friends, Balakireff, Borodin, and Rimsky-Korsakow, but later the German influences altered the style and character of his music. He has been likened to Brahms but the comparison is superficial. His knowledge of and interest in academic forms served him well as a teacher, but in his creative work

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tended him toward conservatism.

From the Middle Ages is a freely composed piece of program music reminiscent of Liszt, Tchaikovsky and Gliere. Felix Borowski gives the program of its four movements as follows: The first, Prelude, "suggests a castle by the seashore in which are two lovers. The second, Scherzo, represents a Death dance in a street theater, with Death playing his violin and inviting the people to dance. The third is the graceful serenade of a troubadour." The fourth, subtitled The Crusaders, combines a soldier's march with chanting and blessing of the priests. The most immediately attractive movement is the Scherzo, though I profess to find its program far-fetched. The troubadour serenade is not unattractive but the opening movement and the finale are long-winded and less persuasive in drama than sentiment. After the Borodin symphony, this music seems rather tame and commonplace.

Sevitzky's performance bespeaks care and preparation, conveying a conviction for the music which many listeners will undoubtedly appreciate. The recording is resonant and tonally opulent.

—P.H.R.

HANDEL (arr. Kindler): *The Faithful Shepherd—Suite*; National Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Hans Kindler. Victor set DM-1224, two discs, price \$3.50 (manual set \$4.50).

▲ In August 1941, Columbia issued Beecham's arrangement of a suite from Handel's unsuccessful opera, *Il Pastor fido*. Beecham's version has eight parts against Kindler's five, and proves a more judicious and attractive sampling of Handel's delectable music. As I said in my original review, the suite might have been conceived as such by Handel, so appropriately does it fit together. One misses in Kindler's selections the lovely Adagio with its poetic musing, the Bourree and the Pastoral. This comes, of course, from long familiarity with the Beecham set, which neither in orchestration nor in performance is seriously challenged by Kindler. For some the superior reproduction of the present album may be a recommendation, but for me this dissipates some of the charm and intimacy which exists in the earlier release.

—P.H.R.

SMETANA: *The Bartered Bride—Overture*; Sadler's Wells Orchestra, conducted by Lawrence Collingwood. Columbia disc 72588-D., price \$1.25.

▲ This is a more fluent performance than the recent Defauw-Chicago Symphony endeavor, admirably recorded for brilliancy in the loud passages but rather curiously blanketed in the softer ones. The Sadler's Wells Orchestra is an operatic organization and undoubtedly knows this music by heart. It assuredly does justice to its irresistible merriment under the adept direction of Mr. Collingwood. Whether this disc and the Defauw one are better than the 1940 Fielder version remains a decision for the record buyer. I plump for the latter. —P.G.

SMETANA: *Wallenstein's Camp, Op. 14 (Symphonic Poem)*; Czech Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Rafael Kubelik. Mercury set DM-11, two discs, price \$3.75.

▲ Based on the opening of Schiller's tripartite drama, this tone poem one of three Smetana wrote around the time he was conductor of the orchestra and choral society at Goteborg, Sweden (1856-61). The others, *Richard III* and *Hakon Jarl*, have also been recorded in Czechoslovakia, and as this is a repressing of the original Czech Telefunken set it may be assumed that Mercury intends to re-issue the others at a later date.

It is of interest to know that Schiller's tri-partite drama inspired at least two composers to write tone poems. Vincent d'Indy, in 1882 when largely under the influence of Wagner, wrote three based on the three parts of the Schiller work. The French composer's *Wallenstein's Camp* was recorded around 1930 by Pathé, with d'Indy conducting the orchestra and speaking a few words at the end of the recording. (Pathé discs X-8806/07). That issue was part of a series featuring French composers and their works (in all of which the composers gave brief talks at the end).

If d'Indy's *Wallenstein's Camp* suggests Wagnerian influence, assured Smetana's conveys Liszt influences. Liszt was friendly disposed toward Smetana, having financially helped him several years before. Hence, in *Wallenstein's Camp*, as Rosa Newmarch has said, Smetana "is Liszt's whole-hearted admirer, and perhaps at this period of his life inclined to pay him that form of homage

said to be the sincerest flattery". When he wrote this opus, Smetana was not yet interested in the national idiom, which seems a pity as the introduction of Slavonic themes might have given the music added interest. Moreover, they would have been legitimate as the scene of the play is on the composer's native soil and the "motley crowd" under Wallenstein's command is known to have contained Slavonic elements. There is a goodly share of pomp and circumstance in this music with its trumpet fanfares and martial spirit. It is an uneven work, the best pages of which are its dancelike sections and a brief, sinister slow section.

Kubelik and the famous Czech Philharmonic do full justice to this music and the recording is realistic. Less bass is required here.

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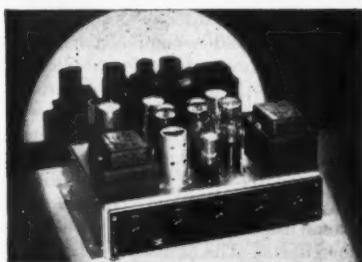
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STRAUSS: *Salome—Dance of the Seven Veils*; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Victor disc 12-0344, price \$1.25.

▲ I have heard more violent and sensational performances of Salome's dance but none which brought greater subtlety to the motives of Salome's seductiveness, desire and triumph, or such articulate finesse to melody and phrase. Beecham responds as one to the manner born, answering a royal decree to perform. Even the tawdry characteristics of the music seem less commonplace than usual. Never before on records has the instrumental timbre and coloring been more clearly and tellingly exploited by conductor and so realistically conveyed by recording. (For best performance the bass definition should be lessened.)



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VIVALDI (arr. Molinari): *Concerto in A major* (*L'Eco in lontano*); A. Gramegna (solo violin), with Orchestra Sinfonia dell' EIAR, conducted by Willy Ferrero. Cetra set, two discs, price \$6.00.

VIVALDI (liberally transcribed by Tamburini): *Concerto in B minor*; Mario Salerno (piano), with Orchestra Sinfonia dell' EIAR, conducted by A. La Rosa Parodi. Cetra discs CB 20302/03, price \$5.00.

VIVALDI (arr. Mortari): *Olimpiade—Sinfonia*; Orchestra della Radio Italiana, conducted by Mario Rossi. Cetra disc BB 25185, price \$2.50.

▲The nickname of Vivaldi (1675-1741), *Il prete rosso*—the red-headed priest, conjures a fascinating picture. One of the finest violin virtuosi of his time, he influenced greatly the development of the violin concerto. The well-known conductor, Molinari, has arranged for practical modern performance many of Vivaldi's compositions, of which some were previously neglected like the present concerto for solo violin, strings and cymbals. This is one of the best works of the composer on records. Its first movement (2 sides) is sprightly in spirit with delicately songful soliloquies for the solo violin, contrasted against the full-bodied *tutti*. There is some charming writing for the soloist with echo effects. The *Larghetto* and final *Allegro* (1 side each) are imbued with poetic charm, the former serene in spirit and the latter daintily dancelike. The solo violin playing is perfection itself with some exquisite "feathery phrasing", and Ferrero's orchestral direction is thoroughly companionable.

The *B minor Concerto*, said to be by an anonymous 18th-century composer, has long been attributed to Vivaldi. Bach, in his time, arranged it for solo cembalo. The present transcription, based on Bach, superimposes a rather thick-textured orchestration which gives the music the character of a more modern work in the classical vein. The purist may decry the liberality of the arranger, rightfully claiming that the instrumentation borders on the pretentious. However, the stylistic and sympathetic playing of the soloist, delighted me throughout and I cannot help feeling that Tamburini devised a most effective opus for Salerno's talents. The orchestra playing is competent.

The single disc contains an overture to one of Vivaldi's operas. Typical of the 18th-

century *sinfonia* it begins and ends with a gay and buoyant allegro divided by a slow middle section. Melodically attractive this work makes a good opening number for a Vivaldi concert. These Italian conductors seem to have a full appreciation of the songful characteristics of Vivaldi's music, and Rossi is no exception.

The recording in the three works remains admirable, especially in its appropriate gradations of dynamics in which soft passages are true *pianissimi*.

—P.H.R.

YOUNG: *Arizona Sketches* (2 sides); *Travelin' Light* (1 side); *In a November Garden* (1 side); *Manhattan Concerto* (2 sides); Artist Recording Orchestra, conducted by Victor Young, with Harry Sukman at the piano in *Manhattan Concerto*. Artist set JY-11, price \$7.00 (vinylite).

▲Victor Young, who holds the position of composer for the Paramount Studios, has written many moving picture scores. His style is singularly facile, unpretentious and sentimental—a sort of compromise between Kostelanetz and Grofé. The present works are extraneous orchestral ones, all written for popular consumption, very slickly orchestrated and smoothly performed. The titles convey no definite impressions—*Manhattan Concerto* could be called Hollywood or Chicago, and *Arizona Sketches* might be Colorado or Utah. I like best the composer's *Travelin' Light*, a bit of perpetual motion, in the popular vein. Good recording of the studio variety.

—P.G.



BEETHOVEN: *Concerto No. 4 in G major, Op. 58*; Robert Casadesus (piano) with the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia set M or MM-744, four discs, price \$6.00.

▲As an admirer of the pianist, I am pleased to have his recording of one of the loveliest piano concertos ever written. It will share a place of honor in my record library along with the Schnabel set. If the latter is played oftener it will be because Schnabel penetrates more deeply the heart of the music, revealing

a more intuitive approach to its composer. Casadesus' unmistakable Gallic refinement and polish are attributes to value, but they lead him on occasion to push the composer into second place.

I remember hearing Casadesus play this concerto in Carnegie Hall and admiring the intimacy and perfection of his execution, but feeling its dynamic scale belonged in a smaller auditorium. On records, one is not reminded of a large hall though some spaciousness of sound prevails in the reproduction. The proper prospectus on Casadesus and his piano are contrived with the recording mike which, in my estimation, makes his playing more appreciable via the record than it was in the concert hall. The competence of the orchestral playing is irrefutable but I find myself wishing that Ormandy had been a little less forthright and more of the companion that Stock was to Schnabel. —J.N.

ENESCO (arr. Sebastian): *Roumanian Rhapsody No. 1* (2 sides); KLEINSINGER: *Street Corner Concerto* (2 sides); GRIFFES (arr. Sebastian): *Poème* (2 sides); Johan Sebastian (harmonica), with Russ Case and his Orchestra. Victor set DC 43, price \$3.75.

▲A guy standing under a lamp post playing on a harmonica—that's the picture on the cover, illustrating—of course—the Kleinsinger concerto. But the Kleinsinger concerto is a long way from the sort of harmonica playing we'd encounter on a street corner, and one wonders if the woman in the third story window or the gang on the street would stay with it to the end. It assimilates a popular style but becomes a bit pretentious with its dissonance and studied technical effects. Not even its echoes of others (Gershwin's spirit is not far from the composer's elbow on many occasions) gives it the true popular touch. As a vehicle for Sebastian's extraordinary harmonica playing it gives him many virtuoso opportunities, though one feels he works hard for a rather futile cause. More effective is the player's arrangement of Enesco's familiar rhapsody. It has spontaneity and dash, and exhibits Sebastian's technical accomplishments most fittingly. The arrangement of Griffes' *Poem*, originally for flute and orchestra, also serves Sebastian well, but familiarity with the recording by Joseph Mariano and the Eastman-

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Rochester Orchestra (Victor disc 11-8349) finds me preferring the original version. While I can and do admire Sebastian's poised and expressive playing, I find the harmonica somewhat monotonous in tonal coloring for the best exploitation of this sensitive music with its suggestion of oriental rhythm and coloring. In the best sense of the word the album is a novelty, which deserves the respect of music lover and musician. It makes one wish that more original compositions were available to a good harmonica player. Case and his Orchestra serve the soloist well, though the emphasis seems on the heavier side. But Sebastian stands out like a light that shines brightly and conspicuously. Satisfactory recording.

—P.G.

KHACHATURIAN: *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*; David Oistrakh with the Russian State Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Alexander Gauk. Mercury set DM-10, five discs, price \$7.50.

▲David Oistrakh is the leading violin virtuoso of the U.S.S.R., and one does not listen to half a record face without realizing his splendid accomplishments. His technique is smooth and assured, his tone rich, glowing and not infrequently exquisitely refined in the manner of a Milstein or a Szigeti. Khachaturian wrote this concerto for him, keeping it restricted—one suspects—to a nationalistic expression to please the Soviet State. That it "has a root in that 'optimistic' type of art which the U.S.S.R. has encouraged", is unquestionably true. That it has a goodly share of lush romanticism suggests a hangover from an old Russia which apparently is not disapproved. The work is far too long for the importance of its ideas. Emotionally, it skims the surface, even the slow movement which contains some of the most attractive pages is merely mood music with an oriental flavor. As a vehicle for Oistrakh's talents it serves a useful purpose, but one would like to hear this gifted artist in more substantial fare.

The recording, made during the war, is one of the best we have had from Russia. It is tonally more free than the Kaufman-Santa Monica Symphony set (issued by Concert Hall) though the orchestral playing offers no marked improvement. It is the violinist who sways our acceptance of the

set in his favor, inasmuch as his playing does not stress the restlessness of the first and last movements. Decca issued this set in England in March 1943, when Russia was regarded as a valued ally. It was hinted sometime back that another domestic company would release it here, but one can be grateful that Mercury procured the rights to supply us with its smooth-surfaced discs.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *Concerto for Oboe and Strings* (5 sides); Mitchell Miller and the Sadenberg Little Symphony, conducted by Daniel Sadenberg, and MILAN (arr. Johnson): *Pavana and Gigue* (1 side); Mitchel Miller (English horn) and the Sadenberg Little Symphony. Mercury set DM-7, price \$5.00.

▲Vaughan Williams wrote this work during the dark days of the war, yet there is no implication in the music of those dire times. It is as though the composer remembered years goneby when England was at peace and her verdant countryside was unscared by the devastation of falling bombs. For this is a pastoreale full of the spirit of that romantic folklorism which Vaughan Williams so intimately feels. Though the music is contemplative, it is surprisingly full of the spirit of youth, and fresh and eager in its melodic contours. The choice of the oboe as a solo instrument is a happy one for music so prevailingly bucolic in spirit, and the composer's handling of that instrument is masterful.

There are those who disparage Vaughan Williams for his love of folkish melodies, archaic harmonies and modes. Yet, like de Falla, Bartok and Stravinsky, his method is more an assimilation than an imitation, and it is to the credit of each that they have produced worthwhile new music from old sources. Someone once said that the use or assimilation of folk material in cultivated music does not necessarily mean a lack of melodic invention in a composer, rather it reveals him as more than unusually sensitive to appealing melody. In this concerto, Vaughan Williams creates a sort of ecstatic song which is by turns lively, elative, and contemplative. It recalls his *The Lark Ascending*, that rhapsodic romance for solo violin and orchestra, and also his *Concerto Accademico*, though there is greater spon-

taneity here than either of the other works.

We have had occasion to admire on records the finished artistry of Mitchell Miller, but the eloquence of his art is more fully revealed in this work. I can hardly imagine a better performance of the solo part or a more sympathetic one of the orchestral. One can understand the composer's expression of appreciation when he heard these records last spring.

The filler-in is an attractive arrangement of two dance pieces, originally written for an old Spanish lute, by the 16th-century Spanish composer Luis Milan.

It is not alone quality of performance that recommends this set, but splendid recording and gratifyingly smooth record surfaces.

—P.H.R.



BEETHOVEN: *Quartet in B flat, Opus 18, No. 6*; The Budapest String Quartet. Columbia set M or MM-754, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲The *B flat Quartet* has been unavailable on domestic records for some time. The Coolidge Quartet version (Victor set 745—March 1941) was well played but tonally thin and emotionally unsatisfying. The Budapest foursome are in fine spirit and their playing is better balanced than it has been on records for a long time. The first violinist's tone seems stronger and firmer and better related to the group than it did in a recent Mozart quintet. Whether or not this is due to microphone placement, I am not prepared to state. The recording is resonant, spacious, but not unduly magnified in tonal quality, making for a natural projection of the ensemble from the phonograph. In my estimation, the art of the Budapest players is sufficient and satisfying in this performance.

The contention that Beethoven nodded, when he wrote the opening movement of this quartet, is dissipated in the Budapest's lively and alert playing, in which the music's geniality of mood is happily affirmed. The Adagio (in song form) is graciously handled, its meditative qualities warmly conveyed. In following this music the listener should note that its continued figuration plays a

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definite part in the expression. Beethoven was a master at embellishing simple melodic material of this kind which we find even in his later quartets (*Opus 127* comes instantly to mind). The buoyant and difficult scherzo is tossed off in a deceptively easy manner. It takes long practice to do this.

The lovely slow introduction to the last movement asks for a poetic purity of mood which it receives, and the fleet-footed finale—Haydenesque in spirit but true Beethoven in substance—is deftly handled. All in all, a welcome contribution (long-needed) to the recorded works of Beethoven.

VIVALDI: *Concerto Grosso in D minor, Op. 3, No. 11 (L'estro armonico)*; Alexander Schneider (1st violin), and the Dumbarton Oaks Chamber Orchestra, Ralph Kirkpatrick (harpsichord). Mercury disc 10003, price \$1.25.

▲Many listeners will be familiar with this work in the Siloti arrangement, which Koussevitzky has recorded (Victor set 886). I must confess to a fondness for that more modern version and cannot concur with those who feel that Siloti does a disservice to the composer. Our late friend, Henry S. Gérstle—an astute musician, said of Siloti's arrangement, with its added woodwinds and organ, that it was accomplished with consummate artistry (see issue of April 1942). Bach once transcribed this concerto for the organ, which probably gave Siloti the idea of including the instrument in his arrangement.

The present performance is most admirable for its spontaneity and verve in the outer movements; the lovely slow movement is taken at a pace too fast to do justice to its profound beauty. Too, the recording is much too brilliant for the good of the music, which, employing an instrumentation approximating the style of the original, surely asks for greater intimacy than we find here. While the recording balance is excellently achieved, the sound effect tends to a super-brilliance, giving the music a healthy vigor but little delicacy of nuance. —P.H.R.



HITS FROM FAVORITE FILMS: *Laura* (Raskin); *Stella by Starlight* from *The Un-*

invited (Young); *Polonaise in A flat* (Chopin); *Flight of the Bumble Bee* and *Theme from Sheherazade* from the *Song of Sheherazade*; Harry Sukman (piano). Artist Set JY-16, two vinylite discs, price \$5.00.

▲Harry Sukman is a capable pianist with a smooth technique and an agreeable tone. He does his best playing in *Laura* and *Stella by Starlight*. The Chopin, badly cut, lacks imagination and brilliance. There is some pretty playing in the *Sheherazade* music but the *Bumble Bee* seems tame in this piano version (it's a lot more fun on the violin). Good recording of the studio variety. —P.G.

LISZT: *Sonetto del Petrarca, No. 104*; William Kapell (piano). Victor disc 12-0342, price \$1.25.

Liszt's three *Petrarca Sonnets*, from his second book of *Years of Pilgrimage* (Italy), appear both as songs and piano pieces. They are poetic, rhapsodic and ornate, very definitely 19th-century romantic music. The lover in this Petrarca sonnet was contemplative, torn with anguish:

"I cannot be at peace . . . I love another yet myself despise, I eat my bread in bitterness and blend laughter and tears, I hate both life and death. Through thee, my lady, I endure this strife."

Liszt's music hovers between sentiment and technical showmanship; its relationship to the 14th-century is debatable. There are moments in this piece when one expects another *Liebestraum*, but the composer wisely avoids the obvious.

Kapell plays this composition with tonal warmth and technical mastery. His trill in thirds is smoothly and brilliantly executed. One suspects the sentiment of youth prompts him to linger over a phrase here and there with added emphasis. But this is music which allows such treatment. The liquid quality of the piano tone in the recording adds to the enjoyment of the performance. —P.H.R.



AMERICANA: *Aria and Toccata (In Swing)* (McBride); *Blues and Here's One* (Suill); *Danza Brasiliana—Samba* (Triggs); *Comment On Two Spirituals* (Helm); *Ukelele*

Serenade and *Hoe-Down* (Copland); Louis Kaufman (violin) and Annette Kaufman (piano). Vox set 527, three discs, price \$4.75.

▲Here we have a group of musical pieces inspired by folk and popular influences, several of which were first introduced in concert by Mr. Kaufman. The violinist gives them all smooth and effective performances. Considering the type of program, this one has been successfully planned for variety and contrast. The William Grant Still Blues (arranged by Mr. Kaufman), the Triggs' *Danza Brasiliana* and the *Hoe-Down* of Copland immediately appealed to me though the others proved listenable and momentarily diverting. There's something in this album to appeal to almost every type of listener, but whether the entire program will bear continuous repetition remains a matter of personal decision. Recording is satisfactorily accomplished with a good balance between violin and piano.

—P.G.

TCHAIKOVSKY (arr. Kreisler): *Andante Cantabile* from *Quartet in D, Op. II*; and

KREISLER: *Liebelied*; William Primrose (viola) with David Stiner at the piano. Victor disc 12-0287, price \$1.25.

▲Mr. Primrose makes no concessions to popularity but endows such pieces as these with a polished artistry that commands our admiration and respect. Though we may prefer the Tchaikovsky in its original form for string quartet, the viola proves a rich voiced medium for its melodic sentiment. Few who admire the violist will wish to miss this record. Good reproduction. —J.N.



BELLINI: *Norma* — *Casta diva* (2 sides); ROSSINI: *Il Barbieri di Siviglia* — *Una voce poco fa*; VERDI: *Il Trovatore* — *Condotta ell'era in ceppi*; MASCAGNI: *L'Amico Fritz* — *Romanza di Beppe*; THOMAS: *Mignon* — *Romanza di Mignon*; Ebe Stignani (mezzo-soprano), with Chorus in *Norma* and with Nino Conti (tenor) in *Il Trovatore*, EIAR Symphony



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CILEA: *Adriana Lecouvreur* — *O vagabonda stella d'Oriente*; **GIORDANO:** *Fedora* — *O grande occhi lucenti*; **VERDI:** *Il Trovatore* — *Condetta ell'era ceppi*; **WAGNER:** *Tristan and Isolde* — *Brangane's Warning*; **VERDI:** *Aida* — *Fu la sorte dell'armi* (2 sides); Cloe Elmo (mezzo-soprano), with Gina Cigna (soprano) in the *Aida*, EIAR Symphony Orchestra, conducted by La Rosa Parodi and Ugo Tansini. Cetra set 10, price \$8.50.

▲The latest shipment of Cetra records by these two fine artists have smooth surfaces which permits the greatest enjoyment from their singing. Of the two singers, Stignani is the more versatile and one wonders why she has not been engaged by the Metropolitan Opera Co. Her voice is bright in timbre, capable of nuanced beauty of tone and considerable brilliancy. She successfully essays soprano as well as mezzo-soprano roles. Elmo's voice is darker and more dramatically intense, tending to a tonal thickness which best suits it to contralto parts. In the narrative of the Gypsy from *Il Trovatore*, Miss Elmo is more dramatically terrifying and earthy than Stignani, though the latter sings this scene exceptionally well aided by a competent tenor. In *Brangane's Warning*, Miss Elmo is less successful, being tonally unsteady at times. She does well with her part of the duet from the first act of *Aida*, where Amneris taunts Aida about Rhadames, making her characterization more compelling than Cigna's by virtue of superior singing. The other arias exploit the richness and beauty of her voice, though the *Fedora* — really for a soprano — seems a little weighty in substance.

Stignani's *Norma* is both stylistically and vocally appreciable. The first half of the aria is transposed a key lower than the original while the latter bravura section is sung in the original key. The noted mezzo exhibits a lovely legato in the prayer though tonally she does not achieve quite the exquisite shading and vocal opulence of Muzio and Ponselle. Her *Una voce poco fa* follows Rossini's music almost to the letter and is sung with fine style. There is beauty of tone in her *Mignon* aria (*Knowst Thou the Land?*) and in her rendition of the gypsy lad's lament from *L'Amico Fritz*.

CHARPENTIER: *Louise* — *Depuis le jour*; and **OFFENBACH:** *Les Contes d'Hoffman* — *Elle a fui, la tourterelle*; Nadine Connor (soprano) with Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, conducted by Max Rudolf. Columbia disc 72540-D, price \$1.25.

▲Miss Connor, on the evidence of this record, is vocally and temperamentally best suited to Antonia, though there is a youthful charm to her Louise. In both arias she does some of her finest singing on records — singing that is consistently poised and tonally lovely. Her *Depuis le jour* does not build to the climactic rapture and suggests a rather shy ecstasy in which a sweetness of expression prevails. This aria demands a fuller interpretation of ecstatic happiness. In Antonia's Romance, the soprano conveys both the charm and pathos of the character in an appropriately simple manner. Hers is a greatly preferable record to the recent one made by Novotna. The orchestral accompaniments are full-bodied and well handled by Mr. Rudolf, and the recording is realistic. —J.N.

FALLA: *Seven Popular Spanish Songs*; Carmen Torres (soprano) with John Newmark (piano). Victor set DM-1223, two discs, price \$3.50 (manual \$4.50).

▲Those who have seen Carmen Torres in concert need not be told that she is an extraordinary beauty. In this respect she reminds me of the late Conchita Supervia, but here the comparison ends. No one refutes the fascination of a beautiful woman additionally graced with an attractive singing voice. Like "La Supervia", "La Torres" is fair of face and of voice, yet on records she is less successful than Supervia in conveying a hint of her engaging personality. She does not have the unique personal transmission of text as did her predecessor, and she generally employs an unvarying tonal coloring throughout a song. Unquestionably, she has a natural flair for the flamenco. I like her best in the *Asturiana*, the *Jota* and the *Cradle Song*. In *The Moorish Shawl* she does not convey the tragedy of the loss of purity. In the *Cancion* I miss Supervia's despairing utterance on the word "Madre", and in the *Polo* the singer does not underscore the "frustration of unrequited love". The meaning of text and music varies as much with the artist as it does with the listener, and

perhaps the fact that Miss Torres' singing is smoother and less quavering than Supervia's and her style equally authentic, will draw to her an audience that passed over the inflamed Supervia whose poignant wildness is already a classic of its own sort.

SONGS OF STEPHEN FOSTER: Nelson Eddy (baritone) with Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Robert Armbruster. Columbia set MM-745, four discs, price \$6.00.

▲Mr. Eddy's voice varies in quality in these songs, and much of the time he seems more concerned about text than feeling. His unaffected artistry, however, is commendable in material of this kind where added sentiment makes for pretension. He is backed by a small chorus and well directed — though small — instrumental ensemble. Good recording.

All the old favorites are included in the album and a group of less familiar songs — seventeen in all. Some of the fast ones have catchy tunes and a delightful impudence reminiscent of old Minstrel days.

HALVEY: *La Juive*—*Rachel, Quand du Seigneur*; and **BIZET:** *Les Pecheurs de Perles*—*Recitative and Romance*; Richard Tucker (tenor) with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, conducted by Emil Cooper. Columbia disc 72577-D, price \$1.25.

▲Last summer, Mr. Tucker appeared at the Verona Opera Festival in Italy, successfully singing the tenor roles in *La Juive* and *The Pearl Fishers*. One wonders whether the memories of Caruso, Martinelli and others urged the young tenor to adopt a more robust type of singing for these parts, for in both arias he is more dramatic than heretofore. One admires the earnestness and passion he brings to the Halévy, though some of his singing seems a bit pushed. I doubt, however, that many young tenors of today could give as expressive a delivery. The *Pearl Fishers'* romance is a difficult aria which asks for the smoothest singing. It does not lie too well for Tucker's voice and he seems to reach for some of his high notes, though much of his singing conveys an expressive fervor. It is completely impossible not to recall the richly sensuous singing of Caruso in this air (one of his finest recordings). Mr. Cooper's straightforward orchestral accom-

paniments no more than suffice. The re-recording is good.

MASCAGNI: *L'Amico Fritz* (Complete); Pia Tassinari (soprano), Ferruccio Tagliavini (tenor), Saturno Meletti, Amalia Pini, Armando Giannotti, P. L. Latinucci, G. Abba'Bersone, with EIAR Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Pietro Mascagni. Cetra set 106, automatic, 13 discs, price \$25.92.

▲This is a domestic repressing of the original Cetra set, issued last year, in manual sequence only. The surfaces of the present discs are greatly preferable to those pressed in Italy. The music world knows and acclaims Mascagni mostly as the composer of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, a poignant drama of the *verismo* school. His pastoral comedy, *L'Amico Fritz*, is a right-about-face, showing the composer's gifts for lyric melody. The work has a naive and innocuous charm, with much ingratiating melodic writing for the soloists. Some of the finest singing Tagliavini and his wife have accomplished on records is heard in this opera, and this was recently mentioned in connection with the *Cherry Duet* issue, taken from the set. The fact that the composer supervised the recording and conducted the orchestra before his death lends authenticity to the proceedings. In an interview with Tagliavini, in our November 1944 issue, the tenor said he did not like too well the Cetra records made in 1940/41. His best singing, he contended, was in the *L'Amico Fritz* set, the opera which was specially revived for his particular talents. A libretto is furnished with this issue.

—J.N.

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JOHNSON: *My Good Lord Done Been Here*, and **BOATNER:** *On Ma Journey*; Carol Brice (contralto) with Jonathan Brice at the piano. Columbia 10-inch disc 17524-D, price \$1.00.

▲Miss Brice, like all of her race, has a feeling for spirituals. Of the two, both unfamiliar to me, I find the Johnson most appealing. It seems more spontaneous and natural in its expression. The contralto uses her voice quite differently in these compositions, employing a thinner tone. Her vocal line goes in and out in the manner of a folk rather than a trained singer. The accompaniments of Mr. Brice are most discreet.

ROMANTIC MELODIES: *I'll See You Again* and *Zigeuner* from *Bitter Sweet* (Coward); *Summertime* from *Porgy and Bess* (Gershwin); *The Man I Love* from *Strike Up the Band* (Gershwin); *I Love You Truly* and *A Perfect Day* (Bond); *Romance and Beau Soir* (Debussy); Jeannette MacDonald (soprano) with Orchestra, conducted by Robert Armbruster. Victor set MO-11, four 10-inch discs, price \$5.00.

▲A recorded song recital for Miss MacDonald's devoted admirers, in which the soprano sings simply and unaffectedly. I am told that her many admirers demand most of these selections when she appears in concert, hence the program has been obviously devised to attract the widest public. It was a mistake to include the Debussy with orchestral accompaniment. Miss MacDonald should have reserved these for a group of intimate song offerings with piano accompaniment, perhaps done in her own home. An album, *At Home with Jeannette MacDonald*, would surely have an attraction for many.

ROSSINI: *Il Barbiere di Siviglia* — *La calunnia è un venticello*; and **PUCCINI:** *La Bohème* — *Vecchia zimarra senti*; Ezio Pinza (basso) with Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, conducted by Fausto Cleva. Columbia disc 72528-D, price \$1.25.

▲Pinza is a past master at innuendo and his singing of Basilio's "slander" aria evidences his artistry at characterization. The voice is mellow, round and luscious. There was a time when the noted basso made more of a climax when describing the gale that destroys

the victim, but at no time that I can remember was he more subtle in conveying the meaning of the words. It is no disparagement to say that Pinza fits to perfection the role of the old philosopher, Colline, for the tenderness and gentle pathos with which he endows the character. Good orchestral accompaniments and recording.

SELECTIONS from **BIG CITY:** *Lullaby* (Brahms); *Traumerei* (Schumann); *God Bless America* (Berlin); *The Kerry Dance* (Molloy); Lotte Lehmann (soprano) with Orchestra and St. Luke's Choristers, conducted by Robert Armbruster. Victor set MO-1226, two 10-inch discs, price \$3.00.

▲Lotte Lehmann in the character role of a Yiddish grandmother in the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer motion picture *Big City* easily walks away with the acting honors of the film. Not since Schumann-Heink has Hollywood acquired a more natural character actress with an appealing singing voice. Those who know the soprano in the concert hall and the opera house will undoubtedly lament the trumped-up songs Hollywood arranged, but a vast new audience will find reasons to applaud her sympathetic singing in this album.

SPEAKS: *Sylvia*; and **LOGAN:** *Pale Moon*; Thomas Hayward (tenor) with Frank La Forge at the piano. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1426, price \$1.00.

▲Seldom does a young singer with only a few years of public work prove himself as engaging as Mr. Hayward in a first record. For all the dozens of *Sylvias* and *Pale Moons*, I have heard, the memory of none intruded on my enjoyment of Heyward's singing. His is an ingratiating lyric tenor, which he uses with artistic restraint and purity of tone. There is a lesson in each of these songs which aspiring student might emulate. The clearly enunciated words, and the careful phrasing and avoidance of liberties are the attributes of a fine artist. The presence of the ever-reliable Mr. La Forge at the piano suggests he may have been the tenor's coach. Excellent recording.

SPIRITUALS: *O' What a Beautiful City* (arr. Boatner), and *City Called Heaven* (arr. Johnson); Camilla Williams (soprano) with Ralph Berkowitz at the piano. Victor 10-inch disc 10-1425, price \$1.00.

▲ It is perhaps appropriate that Miss Williams makes her record debut in two songs of her own people. Yet those who heard her in the role of Mme. Butterfly would no doubt have preferred renditions of operatic arias. Perhaps these will come later. Hers is a lovely soprano voice, bright in tonal quality and produced with ease. She conveys the rightful exultation in *O' What a Beautiful City*, singing it much in the same manner as one might hear at a revival meeting. In *City Called Heaven* she recalls Marion Anderson, whose darker tones seem more fitting to this quieter mood, though Miss Williams is expressive on her own. —J.N.

SCHAUSS: *Artist's Life* (*Künstlerleben*, Op. 316); *Roses from the South* (*Rosen aus dem Süden*, Op. 388); *Vienna Blood* (*Weiner Blut*, Op. 354); *Treasure Waltz* (*Schatz-Walzer*, Op. 418, from *Der Zigeunerbaron*) arr. Dorati. Miliza Korjus (soprano) with RCA Victor Orchestra, conducted by Antal Dorati. Victor set MO-1221, two discs, price \$3.50.

▲ A few *coloratura* sopranos—such as Maria Ivogün, Selma Kurz or Frieda Hempel—have justified the practice of arranging Strauss waltzes for vocal display, but it took plenty of both tonal beauty and stylistic charm. Miss Korjus' early records, made before she came to this country and to Hollywood, were notable for these qualities. It is therefore disappointing to report that they are not strikingly in evidence here. The voice, I think, has been recorded too close to the microphone, with a resulting lack of room resonance, although the sound of the orchestra is spacious enough. It ought to be stated on the labels that the lady is singing in English—I had played through to the fourth side before recognizing the words "It's a holiday." The spirit of the performance is indicated by the hunting I had to do to find the name of Johann Strauss on the album cover beside the glamorous picture of the *prima donna*. —P.L.M.

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *Mass in G minor*; Fleet Street Choir, conducted by T. B. Lawrence. Decca set EDA-57, three discs, price \$7.00.

▲ My reactions to this recording, the result of listening in the cramped space of a dealer's booth, are mixed ones. On proper equip-

ment I believe the clarity of sound will be better, for this is a recent example of English Decca's extended ranged reproduction. Already familiar with the Fleet Street Choir's fine performance of the Byrd *Mass for Five Voices* (Decca discs K-1058/60, issued in May 1942), I expected an improvement of sound from the FFRR process but failed to note it on an ordinary commercial machine.

Listening to this music I found myself remembering the Byrd *Mass*, for Williams also returns to the Tudor sources for his inspiration. The simplicity of his counterpoint and the freedom from elaboration give it an impersonal quality, yet the mass is not without emotional appeal. The impression of an impassioned reticence prevails, a contemplative approach to the familiar ecclesiastical text which Bach and Beethoven treat more dramatically. One should live intimately with a work like this and only those widely familiar with the literature of the mass could do full justice to its description in writing. There is a type of beauty in this music with which the modern world, I feel, has lost contact. One's susceptibility to much music is unknown until one has tested its powers.

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Therefore, I suggest, hear the lovely *Kyrie* and if it moves you as it did me, take the set home where you can enjoy it in a better environment. Those who know the Byrd *Mass* will not need an urging to hear this one.

—J.N.

In The Popular Vein

by Enzo Archetti

A Presentation of Progressive Jazz; Stan Kenton and His Orchestra. Capitol Album CD-79, 4-10"

Interlude and How High the Moon; Stan Kenton and His Orchestra. Vocal by June Christy. Capitol 15117.

• Here is music that sent New York jazz enthusiasts into ecstatic spasms last winter at Carnegie Hall. On second listening, far from the influence of a hepped-up audience, the impression remains that this is stirring, vital music, revealing a forceful, far-seeing and progressive mind, one unafraid to explore new fields, new sounds, new ideas. There is only one other like it today in the jazz field: Duke Ellington's. The music of these two is comparable and on the same plane though each has grown from a different emotional base.

This music is jazz only in the sense that it is based on certain familiar jazz idioms and is built around the familiar orchestral combination known as the large jazz band. It is not bound to the strict rhythm of the dance or pattern of the popular song. The numbers in this album are: *Lament*, *Impressionism*, *Elegy for Alto*, *Monotony*, *Fugue for Rhythm*, *Lonely Woman*, *Cuban Carnival*, and *This Is My Theme*. All except *Lonely Woman* are compositions of Stan Kenton and/or Pete Rugolo but even Benny Carter's *Lonely Woman* is in an arrangement by Rugolo. The latter, besides being a talented composer and arranger in his own right, is also, in a sense, Stan Kenton's amanuensis, very much as Billy Strayhorn is Ellington's and Eric Fenby was Delius'. He has absorbed his leader's idiom, style, and thought so thoroughly that their individual works are hardly distinguishable.

Each work is totally different from the other. Each is like a separate road leading to a different goal. There are echoes of the Stravinsky of *Sacre*; of Schoenberg-Berg tonalities; even

of *sprechgesang*. The total effect is excitement, stimulation. The playing of the featured instrumentalists is superb, as is the playing of the orchestra as a whole. Capitol has contributed excellent recording.

On the single disc, *Interlude* is cut from the same cloth as some numbers in the album and what was said for them, goes here, too. The reverse is very pallid by comparison, being a selection from the *Two For the Show*. *Mood Ellington*; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. Columbia Album C-164, 4-10" discs.

• Played immediately following Kenton's album, this collection sound a little tame but on second thought one realizes that actually the impression is due to the fact that we are already used to the Ellington idiom and his intentions are more easily assimilated. In reality, this is progressive jazz, too. By nature, Ellington is bound to more rhythmic ideas but his experiments in tones, colors, orchestration, movement, and interpretation are just as revolutionary as Kenton's. In this collection of perceptive, imaginative mood pictures, one characteristic stands out and places this music above Kenton's: its warmth. One feels that it comes from a heart as well as a brain.

Most of this music was featured in Ellington's Carnegie Hall concert last Winter. One of the outstanding numbers is *On A Turquoise Cloud*, in which the Duke's current fascination for the vocalise is crystalized. Kay Davis' charming voice is featured on this record. *The Clothed Woman* supposedly depicts the pulse of an observer as he responds to various styles of habiliment but its spare orchestration suggests to me something else than what is printed in the Notes. *Hy'a Sue*, *Three Cent Stomp*, and *Progressive Gavotte* are more strongly rhythmic numbers, fascinating in their orchestral intricacies. *Lady of the Lavender Mist* and *Golden Cress* are musical descriptions of women—voluptuous music, featuring several instrumentalists beautifully. *New York City Blues* is disappointing as a blues. The album as a whole is sheer Ellington magic.

Walk It Off and *Let Me Call You Sweetheart*; Victor 20-2904. *Mississippi Mud* and *On the Painted Desert*; Victor 20-2852. Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra. Vocals by Gordon Polk and Audrey Young.

• Both discs couple bouncy and romantic numbers, demonstrating that Dorsey hasn't lost his touch with either kind. But only *On the Painted Desert* is done in his lush style. *Let Me Call You Sweetheart* and *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You* is treated with bounce, pep and variation. A real surprise!

Green Eyes and Lover; Gene Krupa and His Orchestra. Vocals by Anita O'Day and Howard Da Lany. Columbia 38212.

Body and Soul and Stompin' At the Savoy; Gene Krupa Jazz Trio (Personnel: Charles Venable, alto sax; Teddy Napoleon, piano; Gene Krupa, drums). Columbia 38214.

• Though one of these discs introduces a new

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group, none of the four sides offers anything really new or sensational in jazz. *Lover* is taken at a terrific pace. What might have been a good example of improvisation, succeeds only in conveying the impression that every player is out of breath as well as ideas. *Green Eyes*, a rhumba, begins at a danceable pace but soon degenerates into an improvisational scramble. Both of the Trio sides have moments but betray a paucity of ideas. All four sides are marred by too much exhibitionistic drumming by Gene.

Concerto To the Moon and Mother Nature's Lullaby; Victor 20-2832 *Little Girl and Just Cancel My Dream*; Victor 20-2813. Larry Green and His Orchestra. Vocals by The Trio and Don Grady.

● In spite of some very promising titles, the music turned out to be quite commonplace.

Bride and Groom Polka and Confess; Victor 20-2812

It's Magic and It's You Or No One; Victor 2862

If I Had You and Music From Beyond the Moon; Victor 20-2914. Tony Martin, with Earle Hagen and His Orchestra.

● Typical Tony Martins. Which means they are well done, some quite meltingly, like *It's Magic and Confess*. These will go well with the girls and the juke boxes.

Meadowlands and Makin' Love Mountain Style; Victor 20-2898.

A Lovely Rainy Afternoon and Ramblin' Around; Victor 20-2837. Tex Beneke and His Orchestra. Vocals by Tex and Garry Stevens.

● The real gem here is *Meadowlands*, the marching song associated with the Soviet army. The march tempo and approaching and receding effect of the original are retained but the rest is now just good Beneke jazz. If you liked the *St. Louis Blues March* you can't fail to like this one, too. *Makin' Love* is good fun in pseudo hill-billy style but the other two numbers are just ordinary.

Mother Never Told Me and You're Over the Hill; Columbia 38195

The Trail of the Lonesome Pine and Turkish Delight; Columbia 38246. Arthur Godfrey, with Orchestra under the direction of Archie Bleyer.

● The irrepressible Arthur Godfrey is still digging them up from the past to "sing" in his droll, sleepy manner. Good fun.

Where Do You Work-a, John? and Pass A Piece of Pizza, Please; Jerry Colonna, with Orchestra. Capitol 15098.

● That piece of alliteration about pizza is a mouthful even for Jerry. If this is your brand of humor, you'll get a kick.

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Love of My Life and *You Can Do No Wrong*; Harry James and His Orchestra. Vocal by Marion Morgan. Columbia 38156.

The Carnival of Venice and *Trumpet Blues*; Harry James and His Orchestra. Columbia 38199.

- The first is commonplace, the second James of the first water. Superb playing!

Woody Woodpecker and *When Veronica Plays the Harmonica*; (a) Kay Kyser and His Orchestra. Vocal by Gloria Wood. (b) Kay Kyser's Campus Cowboys. Columbia 38197. *Woody Woodpecker*; The Sportsmen and Mel Blanc. *I'd Love To Live In Loveland With A Girl Like You*; The Sportsmen, with Orchestra. Capitol 15145.

- The whacky tune, based on the Woody Woodpecker theme from the Cartoons, is a delight. Vocally the Kyser version is better but the Capitol disc has the voice of Mel Blanc, which is that of Woody in the pictures, and the song is treated like a sketch, with sound effects and all. This version will prove popular with the kids. The Kyser flipover is good fun, while the Capitol's is more in the usual vein for the Sportsmen.

Sleep My Child (Lullaby For A Displaced Child) and *Daddy, You've Been A Mother To Me*; Dennis Day, with Choir. Victor 20-2916.

The Romance of the Rose and *Clancy Lowered the Boom*; Dennis Day and Quartet, with Charles Dant and His Orchestra. Victor 20-2810.

- The lullaby theme is material for a distinguished song but not this effort. Dennis Day lays on the sentiment with a trowel so that the pathos comes dangerously close to becoming bathos. The same is true with *Daddy*. The other disc is more in the Dennis Day radio vein, one a romantic and the other a comedy song with Irish brogue.

It's Magic and It's You Or No One; Sarah Vaughn, with Richard Maltby and His Orchestra. Musicraft 557.

- In spite of Sarah's rough voice, a good version of *It's Magic*, a song rapidly climbing to first place on the Hit Parade. The other side should have been better.

Theme Songs; Tex Beneke, Tommy Dorsey, Larry Green, Sammy Kaye, Wayne King, Freddy Martin, Vaughn Monroe, and Their Orchestras; and The Three Suns. Victor Album P-217, 4-10" discs

- A sure-fire hit as every number is already a well established, well-beloved hit with pleasant associations. Every disc's a repressing, and, according to personal preferences, welcome ones. These are pieces by which the orchestras introduce themselves on the air. They became signature tunes because they were a notch or two higher than their usual fare and more than a shade better as arrangements. Unreservedly recommended.

May I Still Hold You? and *Friendly Mountains*; Swing and Sway with Sammy Kaye. Vocals by Don Connell and The Kaydets. Victor 20-2922.

- A mildly entertaining record only because of the echo song, *Friendly Mountains*, from the Bing Crosby picture, *Emperor Waltz*.

Makin' Love Mountain Style and *Finishing School Was the Finish of Me*; Dorothy Shay, with Orchestra under the direction of Mitchell Ayres. Columbia 38238.

Your Heart and Mine and *I'd Love To Live In Loveland*; Jerry Wayne and The Dell Trio. Columbia 38251.

- This is the Jerry Wayne of *You Can't Be True, Dear* fame. These are almost in the same vein. Pleasant listening! The Dell Trio have a big share in both numbers — and they are good!

Everybody Loves Somebody and *Just For Now*; Frank Sinatra, with Orchestra under the direction of Axel Stordahl. Columbia 38225.

- Two lush tunes and Frankie at his swooniest. Expertly recorded.

Every Day I Love You and *There's Music In the Land*; Vaughn Monroe and His Orchestra. Vocal by Monroe and The Moon Maids. Victor 20-2957.

I Don't Care If It Rains All Night and *Hankerin'*; Harry James and His Orchestra. Vocal by Marion Morgan. Columbia 38231.

I Don't Care If It Rains All Night and *Hankerin'*; Tex Beneke and His Orchestra. Vocals by Beneke, Garry Stevens, and The Moonlight Serenaders. Victor 20-2956.

I Don't Care If It Rains All Night; Johnny Mercer, with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. *Limehouse Blues*; Johnny Mercer, The Pied Pipers, and Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 15134.

At the Rodeo and I Wanna Be A Cowboy In the Movies; Beatrice Kay with Orchestra under the direction of Mitchell Ayres. Columbia 38232.

Every Day I Love You and *This Is the Moment*; Jo Stafford, with Paul Weston and His Orchestra. Capitol 15139.

- Every number, except *Limehouse Blues* and *This Is the Moment*, is from the picture "Two Guys From Texas". Musically, the picture should be a success for all these have tune and rhythm. Particularly good is *Hankerin'* which may turn out to be a good peg on which to hang many a jazz improvisation. Both the James and Beneke versions are sample of what to expect. The comic numbers are *At the Rodeo* and *I Wanna Be A Cowboy* which Beatrice Kay does delightfully. Even Vaughn Monroe does a creditable version of *There's Music in the Land*, a tune with Western swing.





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